

MIT World (20090424) Carol Gilligan - Learning to See in the Dark: The Roots of Ethical Resistance (about lecture)

URL: <http://mitworld.mit.edu/video/729>

Learning to See in the Dark: The Roots of Ethical Resistance

Carol Gilligan

April 24, 2009 Running Time: 1:10:34

About the Lecture

In this complex narrative documenting paradigm shifts in developmental thinking, **Carol Gilligan** defines the very capacity of our human nature—to have a voice and to communicate—as the grounds of both love and democratic citizenship. Dissecting the roots of healthy ethical resistance, Gilligan weaves together developmental psychology, neurobiology, ethics, and politics in ethical and moral decisions.

Gilligan provides an overview of the evolution of her research and thinking about gender as they relate to ethics. She recounts in her early research that she was initially blind to gender issues. These issues became strikingly clear to her after completing one study with men about their moral dilemmas to serve in the Vietnam War or resist the draft, versus a group of women faced with the moral choice to continue or to terminate a pregnancy. Through this experience she realized that all previous studies of moral and psychological development had been based on men only. This insight set off a body of research and publication that focuses on the traditional gender splits of thought versus emotion, self versus relationships and mind versus body, and the harm to both genders to operate solely within these separate and restrictive arenas.

From gender, Gilligan goes on to study patriarchy, and looks into the societal issues on how the masculine qualities of thought, self and body have been elevated while emotion, relationships and body have been devalued, causing the psychological community to conclude that patriarchy is the natural state. Reflecting with great relief that "we now have a map," she looks at current political landscape offers insights into the election of Barack Obama and what it says about how our political landscape is changing.

"We are born with a voice and into relationship, and if those capacities are encouraged, not traumatized, then we are able to register within ourselves the feeling of what happens, and that's the grounds, the growing consensus, for ethical action, to be in touch in that sense".

Host



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Lecture Details

- Location: Simmons Hall

"If you separate reason from emotion, if you separate voice from relationship, and mind from body, we lose our grounding in the human world, then it is possible to act without knowing, or even without registering the consequences or the impact of our actions."

Carol Gilligan

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